

NET
OXC-2792
Copy 5 of 8

13 December 1961

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT : Anchor Chain for Aircraft Overrun Barrier, Project OXCART

1. Kelly Johnson at long last telephoned me on 11 December to say that his planning for the aircraft barrier [] has reached the stage where he now needs the Navy anchor chain we have been discussing for many months. His requirement is as follows:

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a. He sees a need for two separate barriers to arrest the forward movement of the aircraft. As I infer from what he said, he plans to install one, and on the basis of its performance, make the decision to install the second one after a few tryouts. He has apparently given up on the nylon net and has come up with some sort of trip wire arrangement mounted on plastic poles at the side of the runway. He apparently plans to place these in such a way that the arresting wire would not engage the nosewheel of the aircraft but would impact instead on the main gear. This, of course, would be possible anytime after that point on the runway where the aircraft would have reached its rotation point (V₁), since the nosewheel would be well in the air over the wire.

b. For this purpose he needs a total of 280,000 pounds of chain divided in equal parts and broken down as follows:

200 feet at 50 pounds per foot
400 feet at 100 pounds per foot
600 feet at 150 pounds per foot.

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2. I told Kelly that in my earlier talks with [] on this subject I was advised that supplies of anchor chain are available in Navy inventory and could be turned over to us on an indefinite loan basis. I was also told then that in order to cut down on shipping costs the probable source of supply would be San Diego, California. Kelly replied that this

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was fine, since he wanted an opportunity to exercise the truck rig projected for moving the OXCART vehicle overland, and that he would plan if San Diego were the source, to move 40,000 pounds per truck load from the Navy at San Diego direct [redacted]. This would give him a chance not only to exercise the truck itself, but would acquaint the crews with the route they would later follow with the main OXCART vehicle cargo. I told Kelly that I would check with [redacted] as soon as possible and advise.

3. On 12 December I talked to [] who confirmed San Diego as the probable source of the chain, and I then gave him orally the requirement broken down as set forth above. [] promised to contact me as soon as he had confirmed the availability of the chain in these quantities, and we will then be in a position to discuss the administrative details of acquiring and moving this much metal. Once [] has called me back, I will ask the Chief, Materiel Staff to get together with him on the mechanics of bringing Kelly Johnson's special truck and the supplies of chain together physically and administratively as well. One thing I forgot to mention was that Kelly would like to be able to pick up the chain within two weeks, and [] says he believes this timetable is possible.

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signed

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JAMES A. CUNNINGHAM, JR.
Assistant Chief
DPD-DD/P

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DDP-DD/P : JACunningham, Jr. /mg